

thereto. While the embodiments have explained the present invention by using a music source as an example, the present invention is also applicable to other content data such as a picture source.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A content reproduction apparatus comprising:

a storage device for storing a plurality of content data encrypted not to be reproduced and an encryption key needed to decrypt said encrypted content data;

means for judging whether said content data is stored in said storage device in an unreproducible form when a medium which is capable of proving that a copyright fee is paid for said content data is inserted; and

means for making said content data judged to be stored in said unreproducible form reproducible by using said encryption key stored in said storage device.

2. A content reproduction apparatus comprising:

a storage device for storing a plurality of content data encrypted not to be reproduced and an encryption key needed to decrypt said encrypted content data;

means for acquiring an identifier of said content data requested to be reproduced via a communication line;

means for executing a charging process needed to acquire said identifier;

means for judging whether said content data indicated by said identifier is stored in said storage device in an unreproducible form; and

means for making said content data judged to be stored in said unreproducible form reproducible by using said encryption key stored in said storage device.

3. A content reproduction apparatus comprising:

a storage device for storing a plurality of content data encrypted not to be reproduced;

means for judging whether said content data is stored in said storage device in an unreproducible form when a medium which stores an encryption key needed to decrypt said content data is inserted; and

means for making said content data judged to be stored in said unreproducible form reproducible by using said encryption key stored in said medium.

4. A content reproduction apparatus comprising:

a storage device for storing a plurality of content data encrypted not to be reproduced;

means for acquiring an encryption key needed to decrypt said content data via a communication line;

means for executing a charging process needed to acquire said encryption key;

means for judging whether said content data corresponding to said encryption key is stored in said storage device in an unreproducible form; and

means for making said content data judged to be stored in said unreproducible form reproducible by using said acquired encryption key.